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Revised Ecosystem Roundtable Mission Statement, Goals, and Objectives

Mission

The Ecosystem Roundtable's mission is to provide stakeholder input on the coordination of existing and anticipated state and federal ecosystem restoration and management programs. This will be done in a manner that fosters cooperative planning and implementation with all agencies and stakeholders, that addresses high priority environmental needs, and that informs future restoration efforts. Specifically, the Ecosystem Roundtable will provide advice on:

- Coordination of CALFED ecosystem restoration and management projects and programs with other complimentary environmental programs being implemented in the Bay-Delta ecosystem,
- Provide advice on annual and multi-year workplans to set priorities for ecosystem restoration,
- Provide advice on the development of an annual integrated planning process to select and implement ecosystem restoration projects, and
- Evaluation criteria that can be used to rate projects and programs.

Comparison to Mission of the BDAC Ecosystem Restoration Workgroup and the Central Valley Project Improvement Act

The CALFED Bay-Delta Program is in the process of developing an overall Ecosystem Restoration Program Plan as part of their development of a long term solution. This Ecosystem Restoration Program Plan represents the "big picture" of how to restore the Bay-Delta system. The BDAC Ecosystem Workgroup is tasked with providing policy input as the Ecosystem Restoration Program Plan is developed. The Ecosystem Roundtable will develop near term restoration priorities, based on the work that has gone into the Ecosystem Restoration Program Plan.

The Central Valley Project Improvement Act has goals in the statute and a set of tools to implement those goals. The CVPIA is compatible with the CALFED Bay-Delta Program's Ecosystem Restoration Program Plan but there is not complete overlap in the goals or the tools available to the two programs. The Ecosystem Roundtable can provide input on how these two programs can be integrated, given their complimentary nature and the tools available to each program.

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Program Objectives

The objective is to develop an integrated, objective planning process in support of the CALFED Ecosystem Program following these principles:

- The program will be coordinated, where appropriate, with other ecosystem restoration programs and environmental programs being implemented in the Bay-Delta ecosystem.
- Restoration efforts should be developed through a coordinated, collaborative process that includes technical specialists from agencies, stakeholders organizations, and other technical experts from the broader public.
- The process to prioritize and select projects and programs must be based on objective evaluation criteria and be accessible and understandable to the public.
- The process must focus on restoration of a healthy ecosystem through both short-term projects to address the needs of special status species or eliminate sources of direct mortality and through longer-term, broader habitat restoration efforts that restore the natural functions and productivity of the system.
- The process must have adequate peer review by outside technical experts at all appropriate points in the process.
- The process must be efficient and result in implementation of the most effective restoration efforts based on the best available information and on available financial resources.
- The program will provide for coordinated project and program selection using the objective criteria and priorities that are developed.

Integrated Planning Process

With the appointment of the Ecosystem Roundtable, there is an expectation on the part of the stakeholders and the CALFED Management Team that restoration efforts for fisheries, riparian habitat, wetlands, and other ecosystem restoration efforts in the Bay-Delta Ecosystem will be coordinated to increase their effectiveness and decrease duplication. To do this, this program proposes to use a coordinated planning approach with technical workshops that are co-convened by the various funding sources and more localized planning processes. A draft model of this planning process is being developed and will be shared with other restoration funding sources to seek their input on how it can be modified to meet their needs. The current draft includes the following tasks:

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- *Overall guidance for 3 to 5 year workplan:* An implementation strategy will form the basis for developing three to five year priorities. This implementation strategy will address priority species, habitat types, and ecosystem processes. It will provide guidance on how resources should be allocated amongst these priorities. This implementation strategy will be reviewed by technical groups and the Ecosystem Roundtable.
- *3 to 5 year workplan:* Based on the implementation strategy, technical teams can identify major problem areas and limiting factors and develop recommended actions to address them. This can be done on a geographic basis for areas such as the San Joaquin and Sacramento systems and for the Delta. Where there is need for a technical committee to work on a program that spans the geographic areas, one can be convened. These teams will be open to technical representatives from the agencies, the stakeholders, and the general public. Their mission will be to develop a prioritized list of problems that need to be addressed and projects and programs to address those problems. Updates on this work will be presented to the Ecosystem Roundtable. Based on the work of these technical teams, a draft of the annual workplan should be available for review by early March. This draft should be peer reviewed by outside experts. It can then be reviewed by the Ecosystem Roundtable and by the CALFED Management Team. It is expected that it could be adopted by late March.
- *Request for Proposals and Evaluation Criteria:* Once the annual workplan is developed, a CALFED agency team can develop a draft package designed to develop individual projects and programs. This could include both CALFED agency actions and solicitation of proposals from outside parties. This is expected to take place in April and early May. This document will not be widely circulated in draft form but will be reviewed by the Ecosystem Roundtable for policy considerations and to ensure that it addresses the priorities identified in the implementation strategy and the key problems identified by the technical teams.
- *List of Projects and Programs:* A complete, final package to solicit projects and programs will be widely advertised and circulated. Proposals that are submitted will be reviewed and ranked. The list of programs and projects recommended for funding will be forwarded to the Ecosystem Roundtable for their deliberations. They will develop a recommended list of projects and programs. CALFED will be responsible for the final decision on the recommended projects and programs in June of 1997. A decision by CALFED on projects and programs does not represent approval under any regulatory authority and the projects and programs must comply with all appropriate environmental laws and regulations.